

Hercules and the Twelve Labors: A Graphic Novel

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm. Fisher', with a small dot at the end.

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HERCULES NOW FOUND HIMSELF
EXILED TO MT. CITHAERON FOR
HIS CRIME... AND HIS TEMPER.



WHILE THERE, HE SLEW A LION THAT
HAD BEEN PLAGUING THE AREA - HE
WAS REWARDED 50 WOMEN FOR 50 NIGHTS.

LATER, HERCULES INADVERTENTLY
BECAME INVOLVED IN DEFENDING
THEBES, HIS HOMETOWN, FROM KING
ERGINUS AND HIS TROOPS.



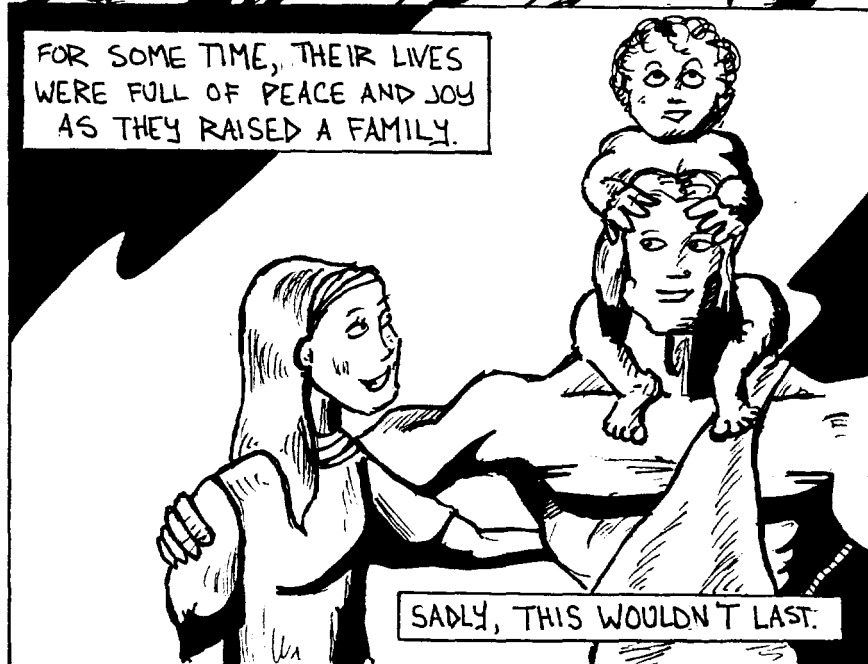
HE PROVED INVALUABLE IN
BATTLE AND THEY WERE VICTORIOUS!

FOR THIS, CREON, KING OF THEBES
GAVE HERCULES A WIFE - MEGARA

THIS, HERCULES, IS MY
DAUGHTER. PLEASE, SHE
IS YOURS AND WE ARE
FOREVER GRATEFUL TO YOU



FOR SOME TIME, THEIR LIVES
WERE FULL OF PEACE AND JOY
AS THEY RAISED A FAMILY.



SADLY, THIS WOULDN'T LAST.

BUT, IN THE AREA OF HERCULES' DESTINY, THERE RULED EURYSTHEUS, KING OF MYCENAE. THIS WAS A KING CONTROLLED NOT ONLY BY GREED AND JEALOUSY BUT BY HERA AS WELL. AS SUCH, HE TOOK PLEASURE IN COMMANDING HERCULES TO DEMONSTRATE HIS OWN ROYAL POWER - THE MORE DEMEANING THE ORDER, THE BETTER. AFTER AN ESPECIALLY UNPLEASANT COMMAND, THE FRUSTRATED HERCULES INSULTED BOTH THE KING AND HERA!



AND THAT'S WHEN THE TROUBLE BEGAN.

HERA SENT A FIT OF BLIND RAGE UPON OUR HERO - DURING WHICH HE SLEW HIS ENTIRE FAMILY... AND HIS HAPPINESS AS WELL!

ONLY AFTER DID HE REALIZE WHAT HE HAD DONE!

HERCULES, IN ORDER FOR YOUR SOUL TO BE PURIFIED, YOU MUST GO TO EURYSTHEUS AND ENDURE HIS TWELVE CONTESTS... ONLY THEN WILL YOU OBTAIN THE IMMORTALITY GRANTED TO YOU BY YOUR GODLY BIRTH.

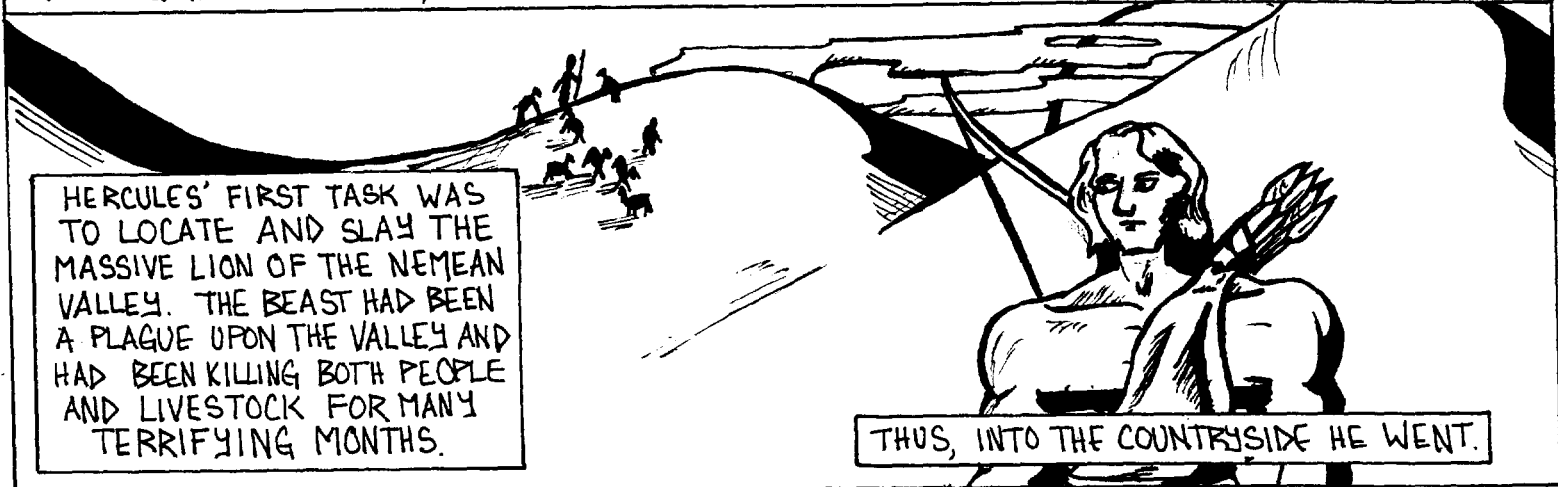


HERCULES THEN SOUGHT OUT THE ORACLE AT DELPHI, A KNOWN REFUGE TO LOST SOULS, FOR GUIDANCE




MUCH TO THE DELIGHT OF EURYSTHEUS AND THE CHAGRIN OF HERCULES, THIS BEGAN...

THE TWELVE LABORS!




HERCULES' FIRST TASK WAS TO LOCATE AND SLAY THE MASSIVE LION OF THE NEMEAN VALLEY. THE BEAST HAD BEEN A PLAGUE UPON THE VALLEY AND HAD BEEN KILLING BOTH PEOPLE AND LIVESTOCK FOR MANY TERRIFYING MONTHS.

THUS, INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE HE WENT.



AFTER DAYS OF SEARCHING, HERCULES FINALLY FOUND THE GREAT LION... IN ALL HIS AWESOME POWER!



HIS ARROW, HOWEVER BOUNCED HARMLESSLY TO THE SIDE!

WITH AN ARROW OF SILVER HERCULES RELEASED HIS BOW.

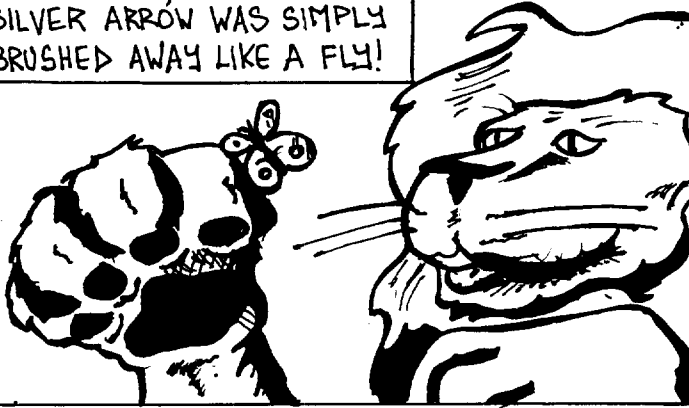


YAWN

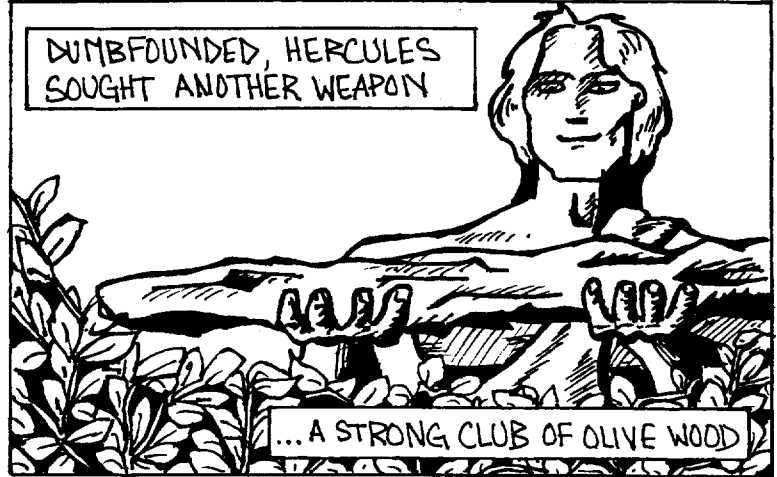


AGAIN, HERCULES AIMED AND RELEASED...

AMAZINGLY, THIS SECOND SILVER ARROW WAS SIMPLY BRUSHED AWAY LIKE A FLY!



DUMBFOUNDED, HERCULES SOUGHT ANOTHER WEAPON



...A STRONG CLUB OF OLIVE WOOD

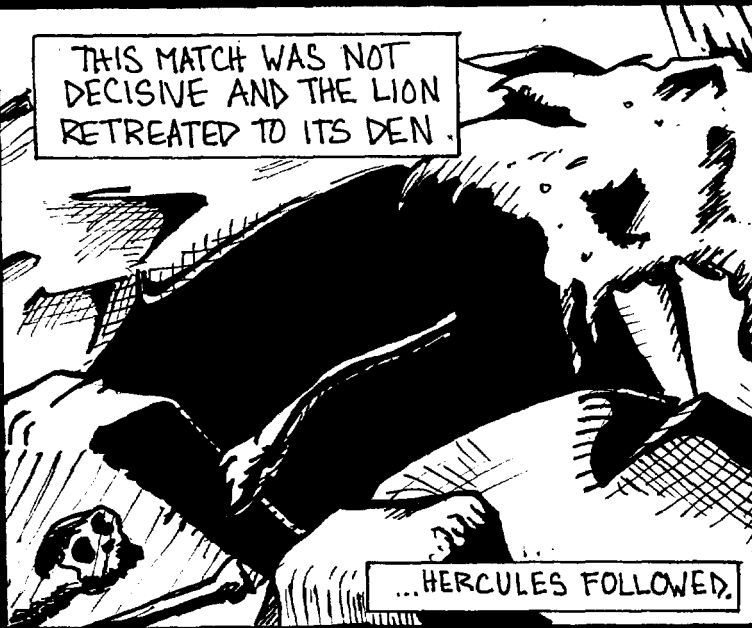
THEN, AS QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE, HE APPROACHED THE SLEEPING CAT AND SWUNG WITH ALL HIS MIGHT!



THIS BLOW, MEANT TO KILL, SERVED ONLY TO ANGER THE LION AND BEGIN A FEROCIOUS WRESTLING MATCH!



THIS MATCH WAS NOT
DECISIVE AND THE LION
RETRACTED TO ITS DEN.



...HERCULES FOLLOWED.

THERE, HE ATTACKED WITH
HIS CLUB WHEN HE COULD



...AND HID WHEN HE COULDN'T.

FINALLY, THEY GRAPPLED
AND A HAMMERLOCK
BROUGHT DEATH TO THE CAT!



USING THE LION'S OWN CLAWS -FOR NO BLADE
COULD PIERCE THE HIDE-HERCULES FASHIONED
A NATURALLY ARMORED COAT FROM THE CAT'S PELT.



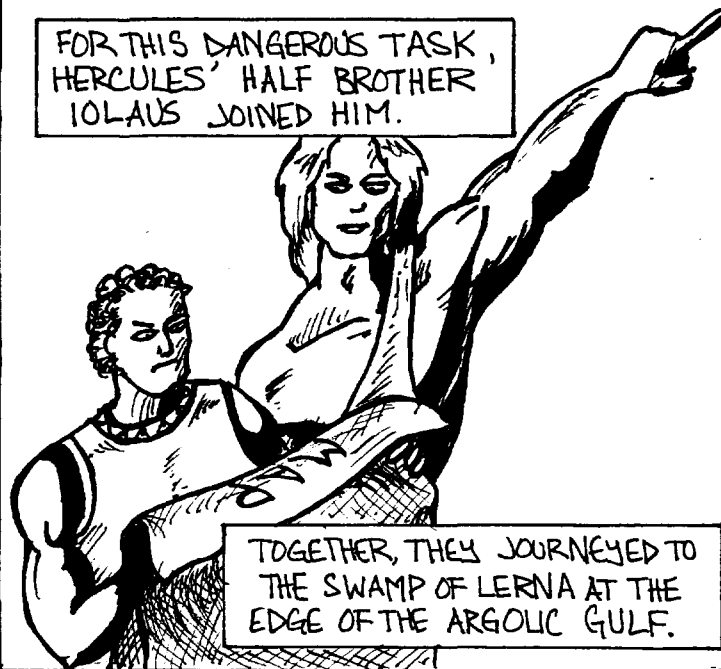
DESPITE THE COMPLETION
OF THE TASK, HERCULES
FOUND HIMSELF BANISHED
FROM MYCENAE UPON
HIS RETURN. EURYSTHEUS
WAS PETRIFIED BY
HERCULES' MIGHT AND
ABILITY TO SURVIVE
SUCH A SUICIDE MISSION.
SO, HE WAS FORCED TO
CAMP OUTSIDE THE CITY
AND WAIT FOR
FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.



A MESSENGER, KOPREUS, INFORMED HERCULES THAT EURYSTHEUS WANTED HIM TO KILL THE HYDRA OF LERNA, A MASSIVE NINE-HEADED SERPENT.



FOR THIS DANGEROUS TASK, HERCULES' HALF BROTHER IOLAUS JOINED HIM.



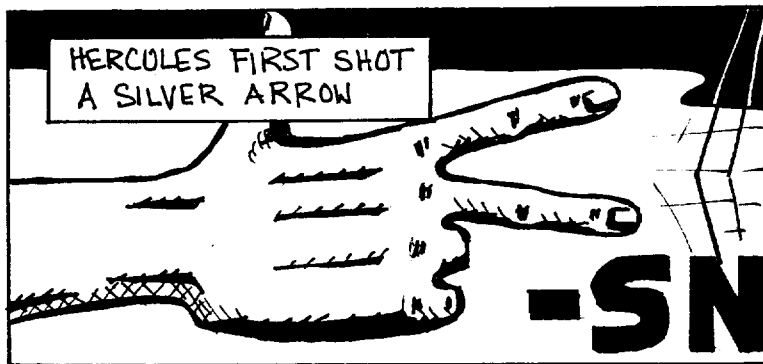
TOGETHER, THEY JOURNEYED TO THE SWAMP OF LERNA AT THE EDGE OF THE ARGOLIC GULF.

A NINE-HEADED SERPENT IS NOT A DIFFICULT THING TO FIND AND, SOON, THEY DID!



RU...RU...RUB HIS BELLY!?





HERCULES FIRST SHOT
A SILVER ARROW



...TO NO AVAIL!

-SNAP-



PLAN BETA THEN!

THE CLUB
WAS NEXT!

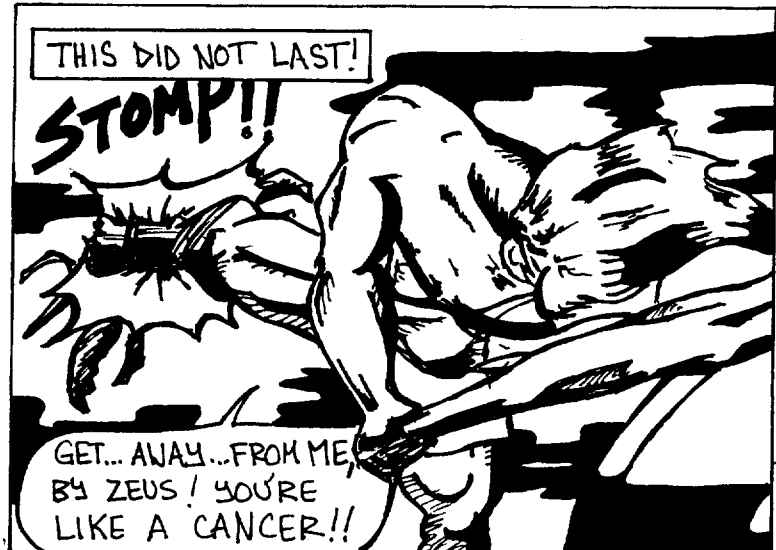


BUT, WHERE ONE HEAD DIED

...TWO MORE GREW!




THEN, TO ADD TO THE PERIL,
HERA SENT A HUGE CRAB TO
FURTHER BURDEN HERCULES.



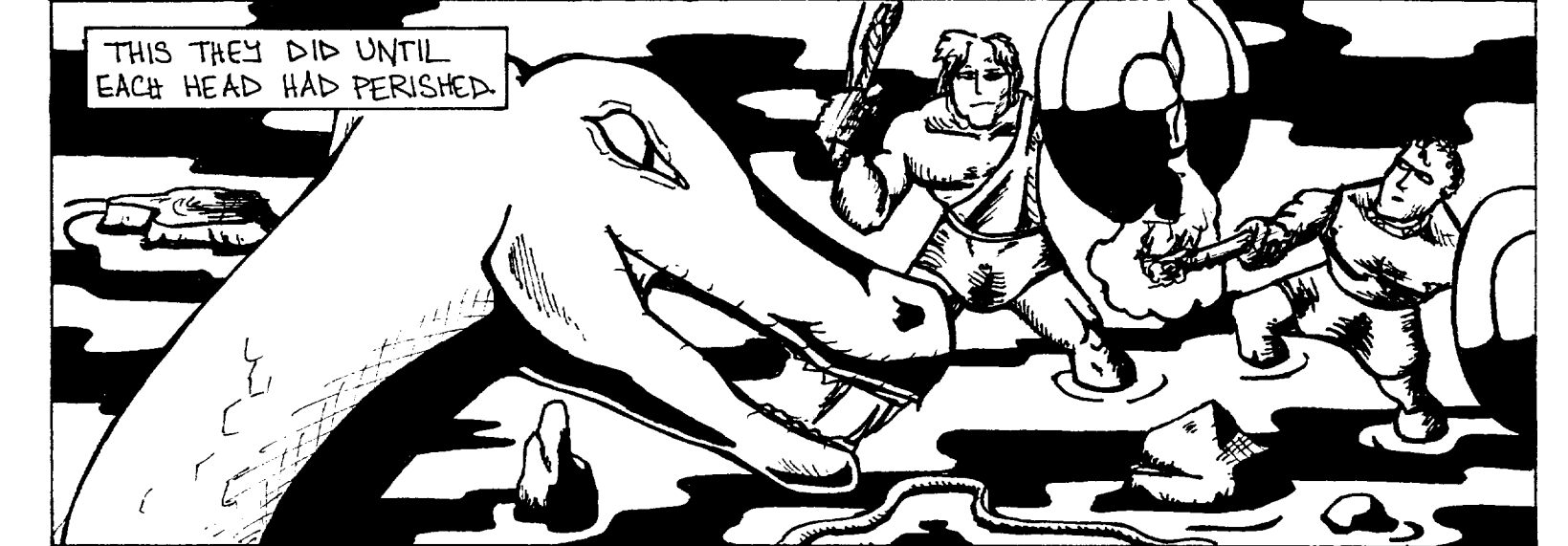
THIS DID NOT LAST!

STOMP!!


GET... AWAY... FROM ME,
BY ZEUS! YOU'RE
LIKE A CANCER!!



EVENTUALLY, OUR
HEROES FOUND THAT
IF IOLAUS SEARED
THE NECK RIGHT AFTER
HERCULES CRUSHED
ONE OF THE BEAST'S
HEADS, IT WOULD DIE.




THIS THEY DID UNTIL
EACH HEAD HAD PERISHED.



ONCE VICTORIOUS, HERCULES
DIPPED EACH OF HIS ARROWS
IN THE POISONOUS INNARDS
OF THE HYDRA-RENDERING
THEM EVEN MORE DEADLY.

FINALLY, HERCULES AND IOLAUS WENT HOME.



BUT, THE CELEBRATION
DID NOT LAST LONG.

SORRY HERCULES, I'M
AFRAID YOUR SUCCESS
IS UNACCEPTABLE—
YOU WERE TO RECEIVE
NO HELP FROM IOLAUS.
AND, SINCE YOU DID,
I CAN'T RECOGNIZE YOUR
COMPLETION OF THE JOB.

ONE DAY, EURYSTHEUS,
YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS!
I SWEAR IT!!

DISGUSTED,
HERCULES RETURNED
TO HIS CAMP TO
AWAIT ANOTHER TASK

EURYSTHEUS HATED HAVING HERCULES SO CLOSE AND QUICKLY SENT WORD THAT HERCULES MUST NOW CATCH THE WILD BOAR OF ERYMANTHIA-A LAND FAR FROM MYCENAE

IN HIS TRAVELS, HERCULES VISITED PHOLUS, A CENTAUR FRIEND, TO ENJOY A BOTTLE OF WINE GIVEN TO PHOLUS BY DIONYSUS, GOD OF THE VINE.

THE SCENT OF WINE BROUGHT BELLIGERENT CENTAURS FOR MILES. THE SMELL ALONE WAS SO INTOXICATING THAT THEY ATTACKED FOR JUST A DRINK!

PHOLUS FLED, BUT HERCULES FOUGHT!

MANY A CENTAUR FELL TO THE MIGHT OF HERCULES THAT BLOODY DAY!

AMONG THE INJURED WAS CHIRON, A CENTAUR GOD. SADLY, A POISONED ARROW COULD NOT KILL THE IMMORTAL AND WOULD SUBJECT HIM TO AN ETERNITY OF PAIN AND SUFFERING INSTEAD!



WHEN HERCULES CONTINUED HIS JOURNEY, HE FOUND THAT THE PEOPLE OF ERYMANTHIA WERE MORE THAN HAPPY TO HELP HIM ON HIS QUEST TO RID THEIR LAND OF THE VICIOUS BOAR.

THE BOAR, YOU'LL FIND IT IN THE MOUNTAINOUS FOREST TO THE NORTH. PLEASE TAKE THIS BREAD IN APPRECIATION, HERCULES.

HERE, YOU'LL NEED THIS EXTRA CLOTHING FOR THE MOUNTAINS.

KICK THE HADES OUT OF THAT PIG, SONNY!

AS HERCULES MOVED UP THE MOUNTAINS, THE AIR GOT THINNER,

...THE WEATHER GOT COLDER,

...THE SNOW GOT DEEPER,

...AND THE FOOTPRINTS OF THE BOAR BECAME MORE COMMON - AND HUGE FOOTPRINTS THEY WERE!

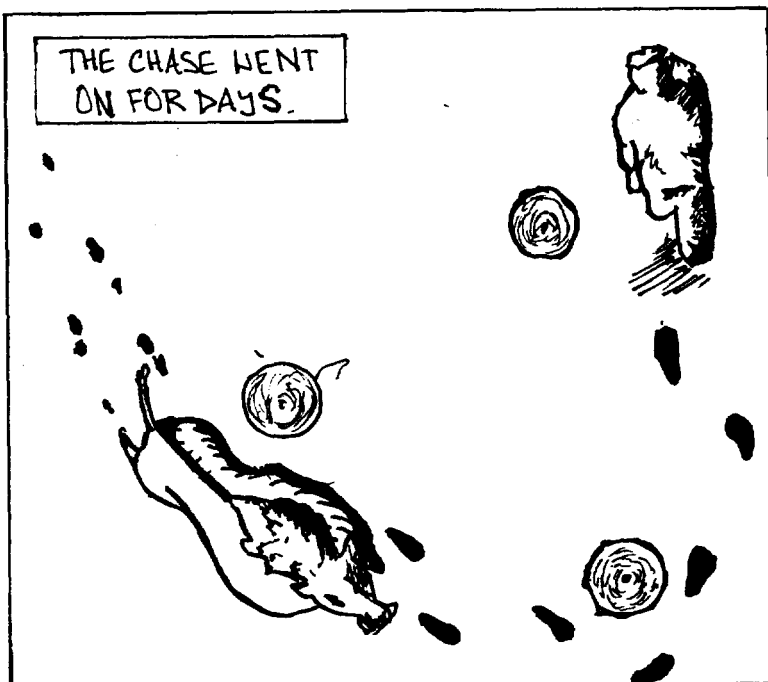
THE BOAR'S ENORMOUS DEN SOON AROSE BEFORE HERCULES

WITH TAUNTS AND JEERS, HERCULES LED THE BOAR DEEPER INTO THE SNOW, THE FOREST, AND THE THIN AIR.

SOOO WEEE!!

...AND SO DID THE BOAR

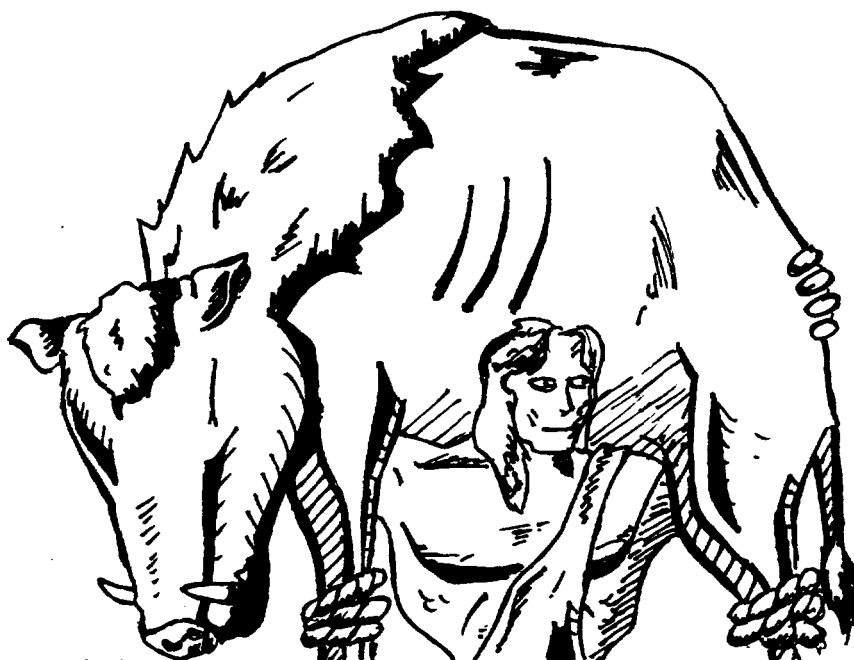
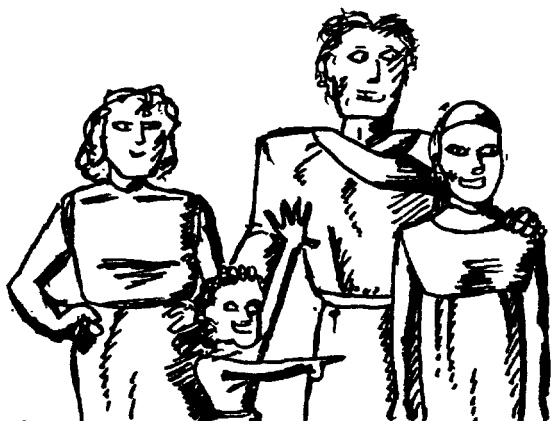
THE CHASE WENT
ON FOR DAYS.



UNTIL, FINALLY, THE
BOAR GREW WEARY.



WITH A SWIFT KNOCK TO
THE BOAR'S HEAD, HERCULES
CAPTURED, TIED, AND HAULED
THE BOAR BACK HOME TO
MYCENAE ON HIS SHOULDERS!



EURYSTHEUS HID
INSIDE A HUGE BRONZE
POT TO ESCAPE BOTH
HERCULES AND THE BOAR-
UNTIL THE BOAR COULD
BE PROPERLY SACRIFICED.

GO AWAY!



IT WASN'T LONG UNTIL
KOPREUS ARRIVED
WITH A MESSAGE.

KOPREUS... HOW
CAN I HELP YOU?

UM...YEAH...THERE'S
A HIND WITH GOLDEN
ANTLERS AND BRONZE
HOOFES IN PELOPONNESSUS
THAT YOU ARE TO
RETURN...ALIVE.



THUS, HERCULES
PACKED THE
NECESSITIES
AND SET OUT FOR
PELOPONESSUS

STUPID KING... CATCH
A DEER... TAKE OUT THE
TRASH... I'M THE SON
OF ZUES FOR PETE'S
SAKE... HOW DARE
HE TALK LIKE THAT!
grumble grumble



DEER? OH YES, BIG
AS THE MOON - ONLY
PRETTIER... PRETTY LIKE
A VINEYARD HARVEST...
WITH HORNS!

YOU HAVEN'T REALLY
SEEN IT, HAVE YOU?

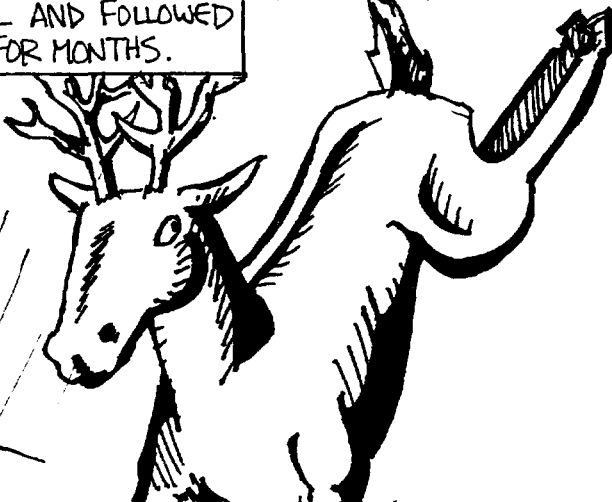
NO... BUT I'VE
HEARD STORIES -
TRUE STORIES

INFORMATION ABOUT THE
DEER WAS FAR EASIER TO
FIND THAN THE DOE ITSELF.



FINALLY, HERCULES DID
FIND A TRAIL AND FOLLOWED
THE HIND FOR MONTHS.

THIS IS GETTING
REALLY, REALLY OLD.



DESPITE HERCULES' TRACKING
ABILITY, THE DEER NEVER
ALLOWED HIM TO GET TOO CLOSE.

EVENTUALLY, HERCULES
NOTICED THAT THE HIND
ALWAYS RETURNED TO THE
HIGHLAND, AFTER HER
ROOMS, THROUGH ONE
CERTAIN PATH. THIS PATH
WAS NARROW, STEEP,
ROCKY, AND OFTEN QUITE
TIRING FOR THE DOE -
A PERFECT PLACE FOR
HERCULES TO CATCH HER.

CLOSER... CLOSER...



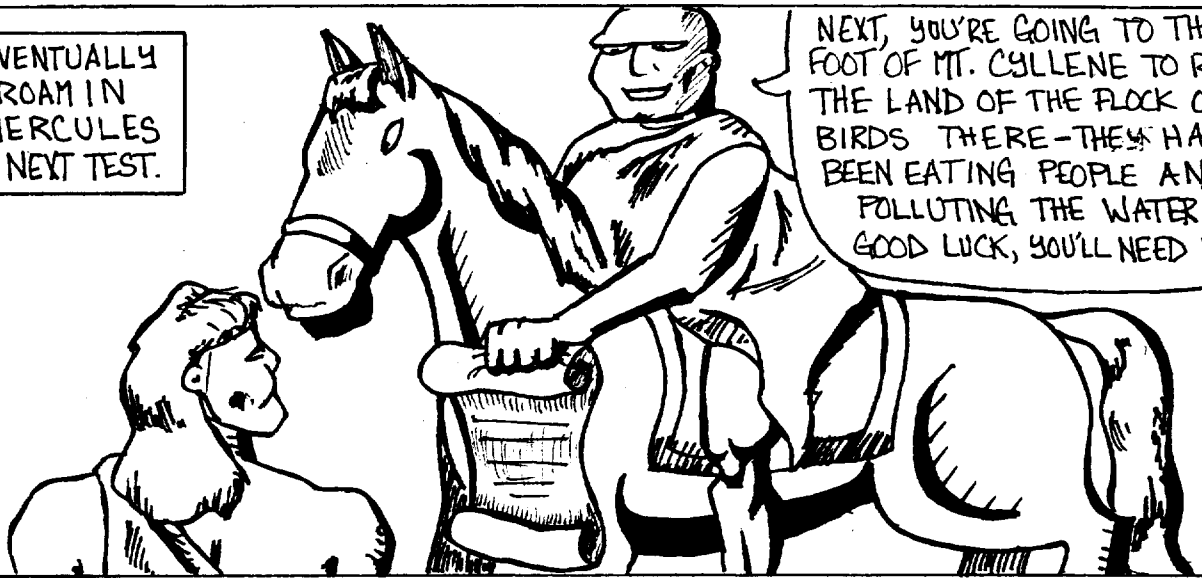
WITH A POUNCE AND
SOME QUICK ROPE WORK

...HERCULES CAPTURED THE
HIND AND HEADED HOME.



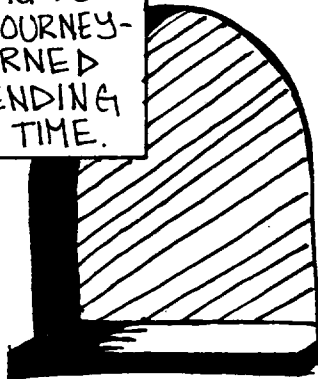
THE HIND WAS EVENTUALLY RELEASED TO ROAM IN ARGOS-AND HERCULES RESTED FOR THE NEXT TEST.

NEXT, YOU'RE GOING TO THE FOOT OF MT. CYLLENE TO RID THE LAND OF THE FLOCK OF BIRDS THERE-THEY HAVE BEEN EATING PEOPLE AND POLLUTING THE WATER. GOOD LUCK, YOU'LL NEED IT.



AGAIN, HERCULES FOUND PEOPLE VERY WILLING TO AID HIM IN HIS JOURNEY- HE OFTEN RETURNED THE FAVOR BY LENDING HIS MIGHT FOR A TIME.

HOW ABOUT A TAD MORE EAST HERCULES?!

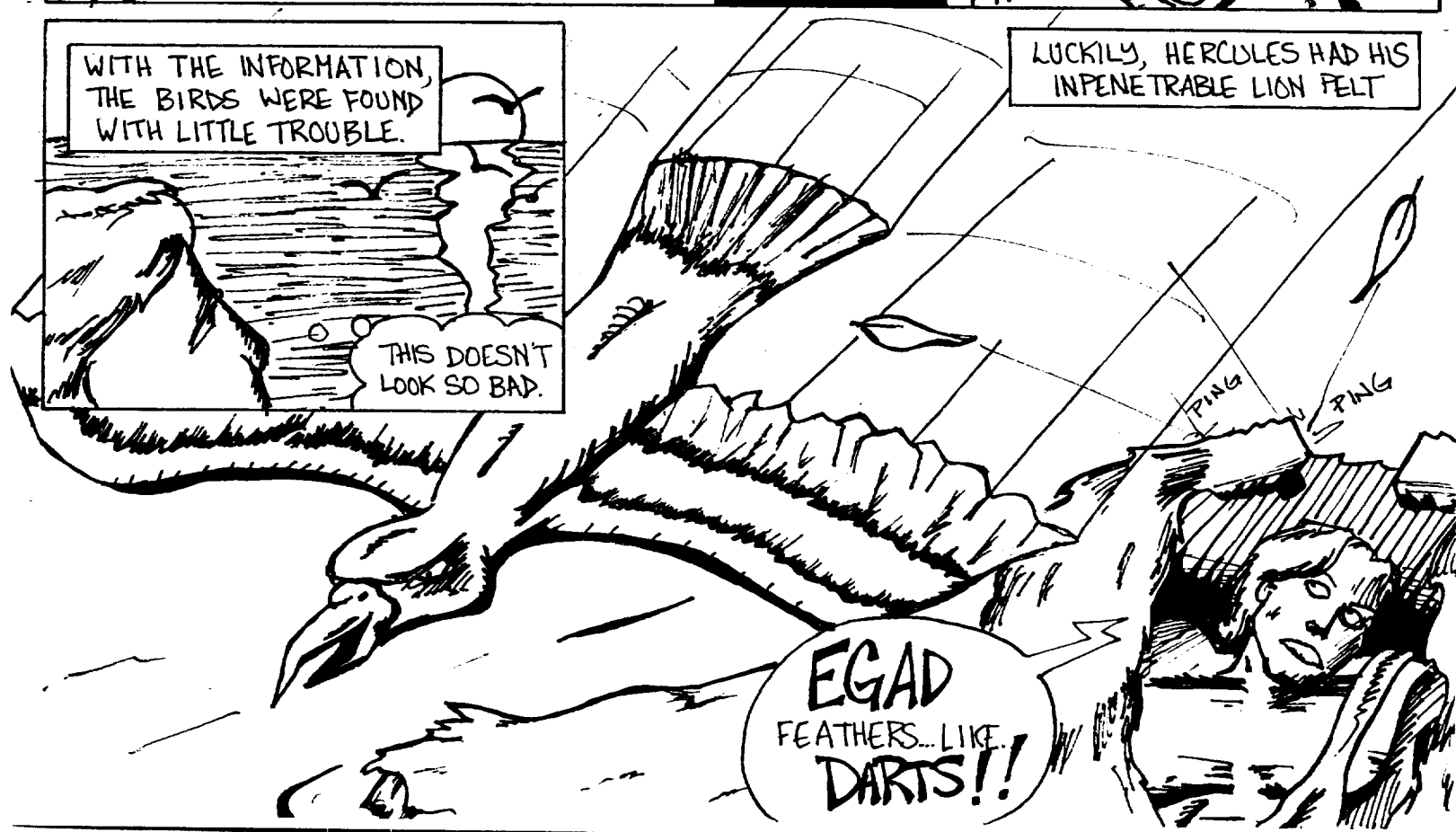


WITH THE INFORMATION, THE BIRDS WERE FOUND WITH LITTLE TROUBLE.

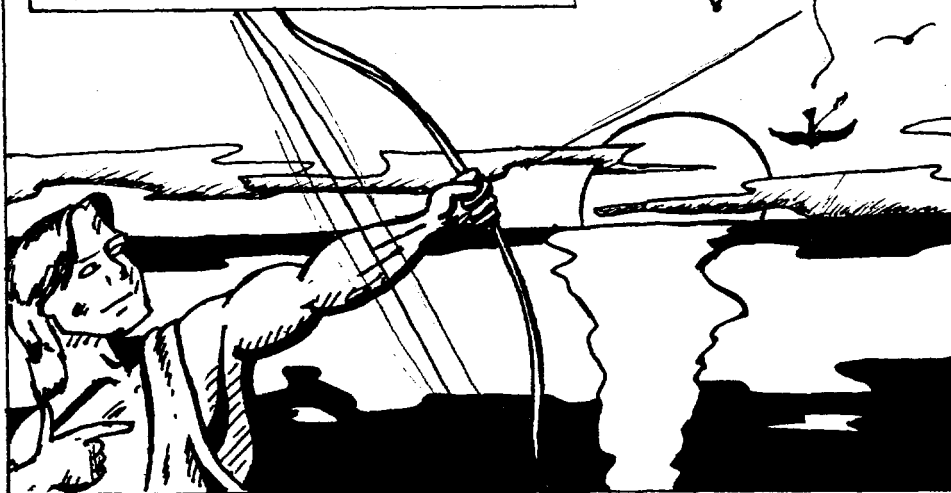
LUCKILY, HERCULES HAD HIS IMPENETRABLE LION FELT

THIS DOESN'T LOOK SO BAD.

EGAD FEATHERS...LIKE DARTS!!



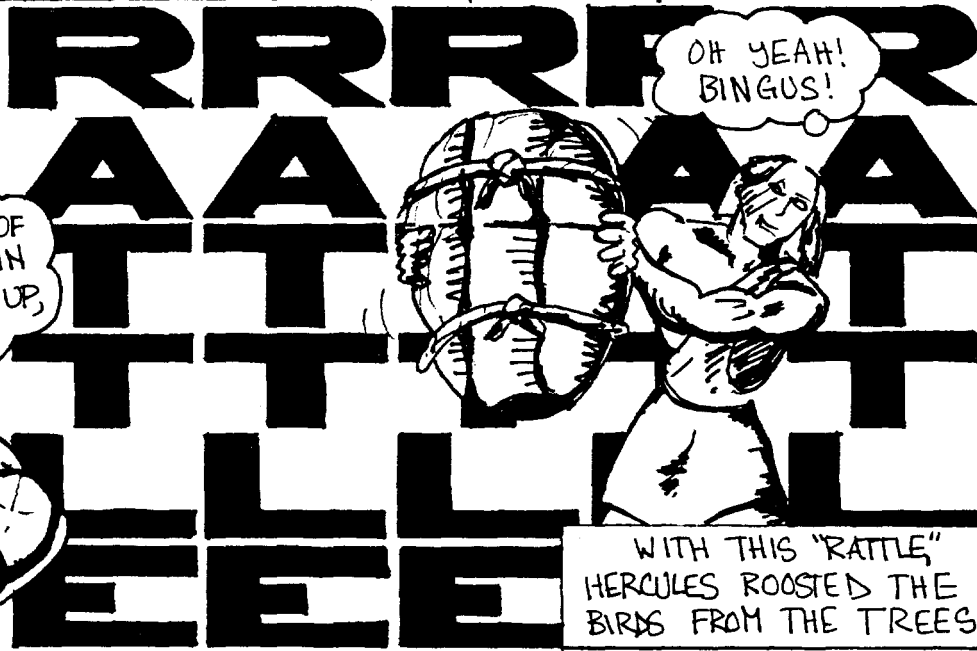
HERCULES RETURNED THEIR ATTACK
WITH POISONED ARROWS. MANY
A BIRD DIED...THOUGH THEIR
NUMBERS REMAINED ENORMOUS!



THIS CYCLE OF ATTACKS
CONTINUED - THE LION
FELT PROTECTING HERCULES
UNTIL HE COULD SHOOT THEM!

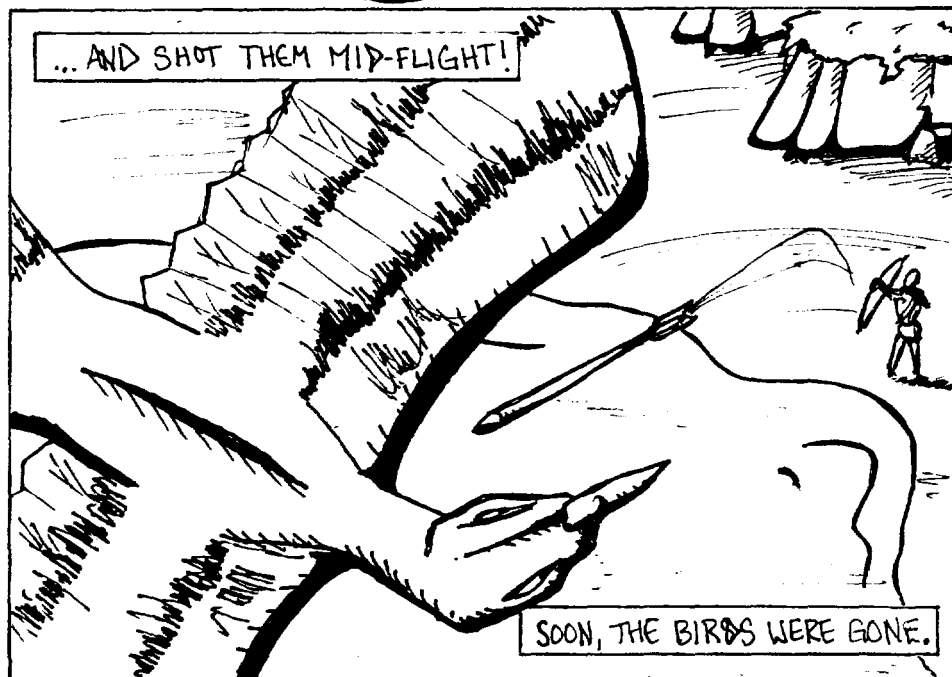


MONTHS PASSED THIS
WAY UNTIL, ONE DAY,
HERCULES FEASTED
ON A TURTLE AND HAD AN IDEA.



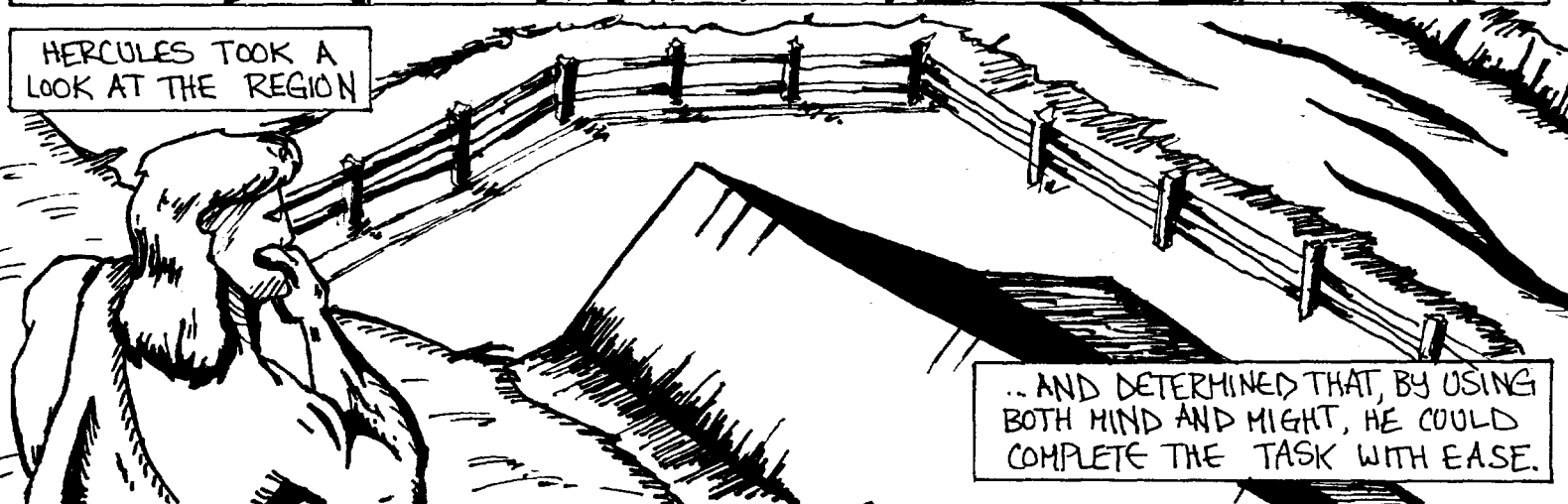
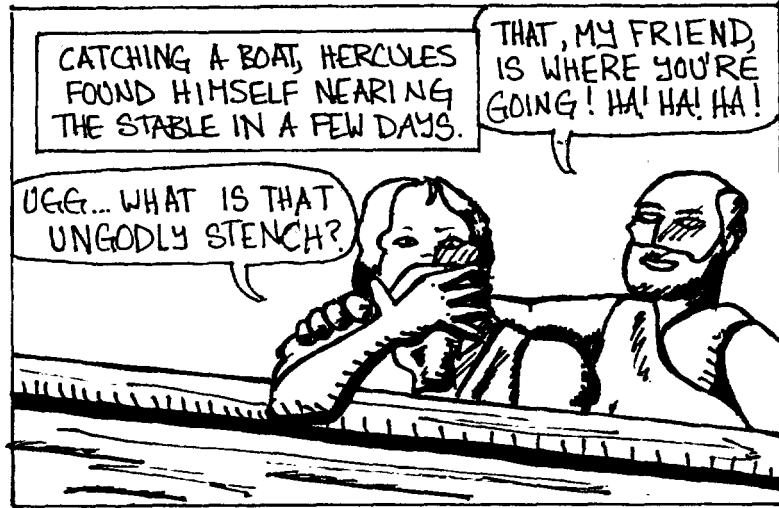
WITH THIS "RATTLE"
HERCULES ROOSTED THE
BIRDS FROM THE TREES

...AND SHOT THEM MID-FLIGHT!



WITH SEVERAL SETS OF FEATHERS,
HERCULES TRAVELLED HOME AND
GAVE THEM TO KOPREUS.





NEXT, HERCULES CUT OFF THE FOOD TO THE ANIMALS, FORCING THEM TO ROAM FROM THE STABLE, WHILE A HERDSMAN WATCHED OVER THEM. HE THEN DUG A CHANNEL THAT LED DOWNHILL FROM THE RIVER TO THE HIGH SIDE OF THE STABLE.

FINALLY, HE DUG ANOTHER CHANNEL FROM THE LOW SIDE OF THE BARN BACK TO A LOWER POINT OF THE RIVER.

THE RIVER WATER RUSHED IN, FILLED THE BARN, AND WAS RELEASED OUT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STABLE TO FLOW BACK TO THE RIVER.

THIS PROCESS WAS REPEATED UNTIL THE STABLE WAS SPOTLESS.

AUGESUS, FEELING CHEATED BY THE EASE IN WHICH HERCULES COMPLETED THE TASK, REFUSED TO PAY HERCULES' FEE AND ORDERED HIM TO LEAVE.

HOWEVER, PHYLEUS SIDED WITH HERCULES AND GRANTED HIM A GOLD REWARD AND A HERALD TO VERIFY THE STORY.

I AM SO SORRY, HERCULES. PLEASE, TAKE THIS ALONG WITH MY THANKS.

HERCULES FOUND SOME TIME TO REST BACK IN MYCENAE - UNTIL KOPREUS BROUGHT NEWS THAT HE WAS TO CAPTURE THE WILD BULL RUNNING RAMPANT ON THE ISLAND OF CRETE. AND, ONCE AGAIN, HERCULES BOARDED A BOAT TO A NEW LAND. INFORMATION WAS PLENTIFUL

EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN. WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT CRETE AND THIS BULL?

OH YES, LOVELY CITY... RATHER FANATIC ABOUT BULLS THOUGH! SURE, BULLS REPRESENT POWER AND STRENGTH, BUT REALLY, THEY GO A LITTLE TOO FAR. BOY HOWDY, SOME OF THEIR BULL STORIES ARE JUST DISGUSTING!

UGG

... VERY PLENTIFUL

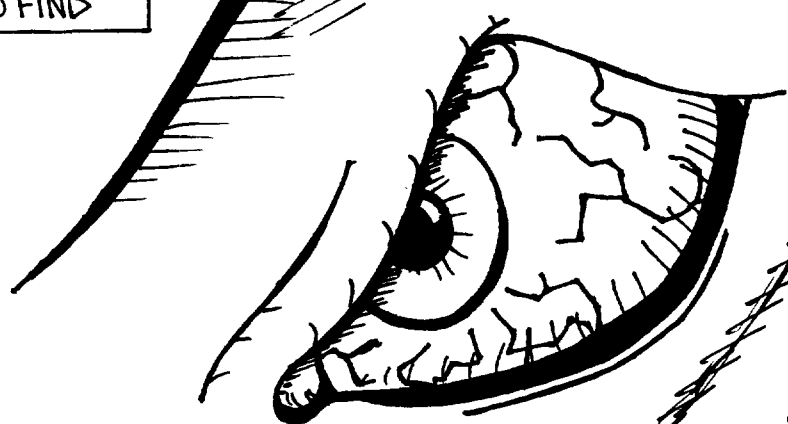
INFACT, THE BULL YOU WANT WAS A GIFT TO KING MINOS OF CRETE FROM POSEIDON. BUT, WHEN MINOS REFUSED TO SACRIFICE THE BULL TO POSEIDON, THE GOD CAUSED MINOS' WIFE TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE BULL. AND, IF HAVING THE QUEEN SWEEPED OFF HER FEET BY A BOVINE ISN'T BAD ENOUGH, THE BULL THEN WENT MAD AND BEGAN A RAMPAGE ON THE LAND

... WHICH BRINGS US TO YOUR JOB, HUH? LAST I HEARD, THE BULL WAS LIVING NEAR THE FOOT OF MT DICTE. I WISH YOU WELL.

AFTER TAKING IN THE SIGHTS OF CRETE

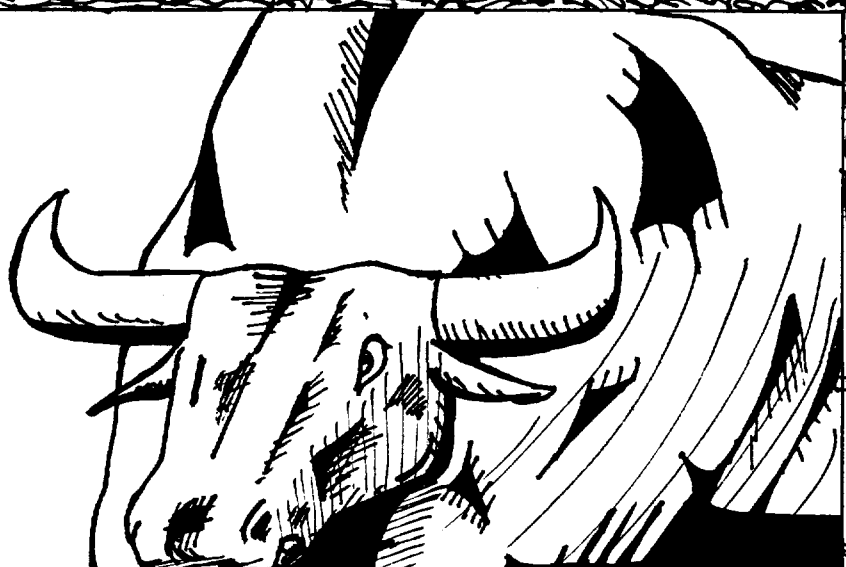
... HERCULES SOUGHT OUT THE BULL.

THE BULL WAS NOT
HARD TO FIND



...A TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION,
EARTHQUAKING FOOTSTEPS,
AND DEAFENING FOOTSTEPS
WERE CLEAR FOR MILES!

IN THE BULL'S WAKE WERE
TREES TOSSED LIKE TWIGGS.
BUT, IT WAS IN A CLEARING
THAT HERCULES MET THE BULL



THE BULL CHARGED



...AND HERCULES DODGED WITH
A JUMP OVER THE BULL!

AGAIN AND AGAIN, THE BULL CHARGED. WITH EACH PASS, HERCULES' DODGING IMPROVED

...AND SO DID THE BULL'S CHARGING!

AFTER DAYS OF STRUGGLE, THE BULL FINALLY TIRED ENOUGH FOR HERCULES TO CATCH AND TIE HIM.

THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WERE SPENT TRAINING THE BULL TO OBEY. HERCULES REGULATED THE BULL'S FOOD AND GAVE IT CHAMOMILE TO CALM IT. THOUGH HE LEARNED TO MIND HERCULES, IT WOULD STILL ATTACK OTHERS. NEVERTHELESS, THEY RETURNED HOME.

EURYSTHEUS, OF COURSE, WAS HORRIFIED BY THE BULL AND RELEASED IT NEAR MARATHON. HE THEN DEvised A NEW CHALLENGE.

KOPREUS, GO TO HIM AND TELL HIM THIS...

PLEASE DON'T COVER YOUR MOUTH, YOUR MAJESTY - I CAN'T UNDERSTAND YOU.

HERCULES, YOU ARE TO CAPTURE THE HORSES OF DIOMEDES, KING OF BISTONIA. RETURN THEM ALIVE AND... HE, HE... BE CAREFUL.

HERCULES BEGAN HIS JOURNEY AND SPOKE TO MANY PEOPLE

...BLOODTHIRSTY STEEDS!

...THEY'RE EXTREMELY ILL-TEMPERED!

...TROUGHS OF BRONZE!

...BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL HORSES!

...DIOMEDES FEEDS PRISONERS TO HIS HORSES!

...CHAINS OF IRON!

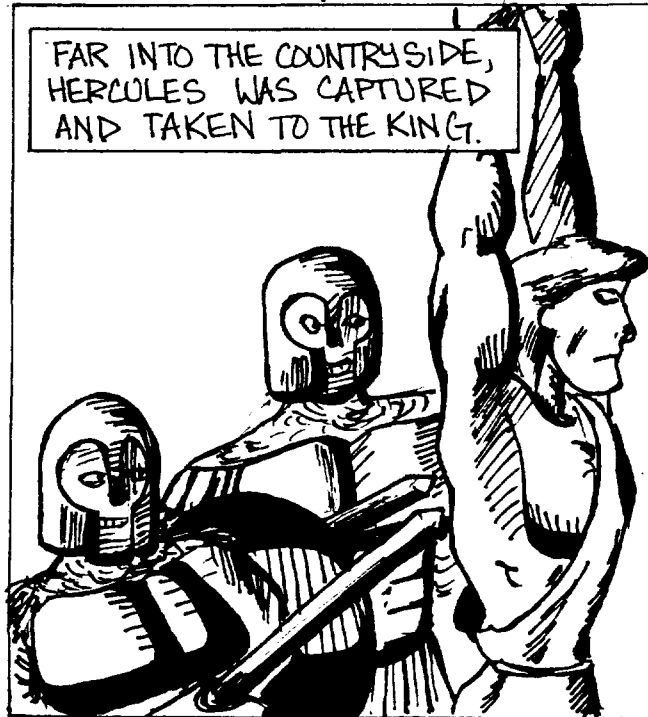
...LEARNING VERY MUCH



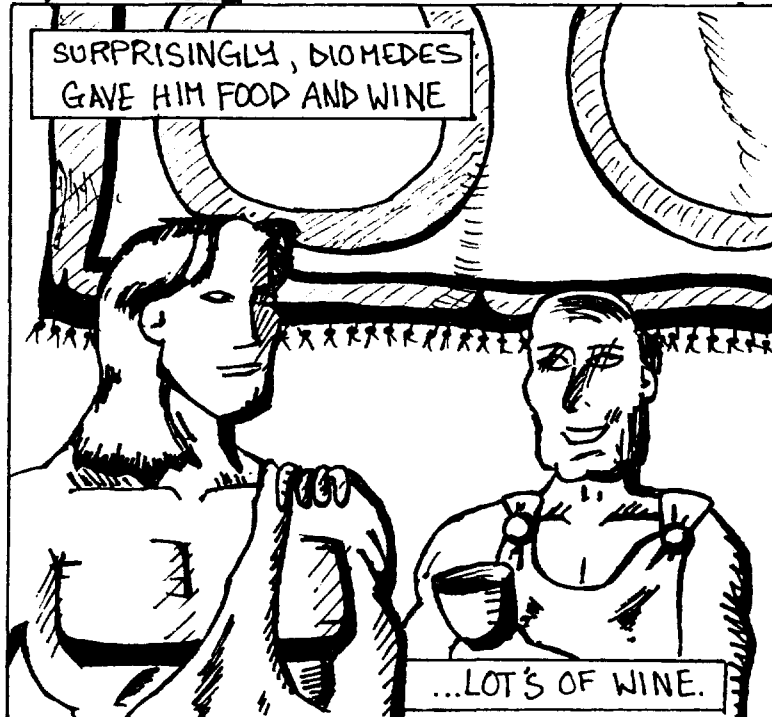
IN THE MEANTIME, HERCULES DEvised A PLAN: FIRST, HE'D ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE CAPTURED. AND, WHEN THEY WENT TO FEED HIM TO THE HORSES, HE'D ATTACK DIOMEDES.



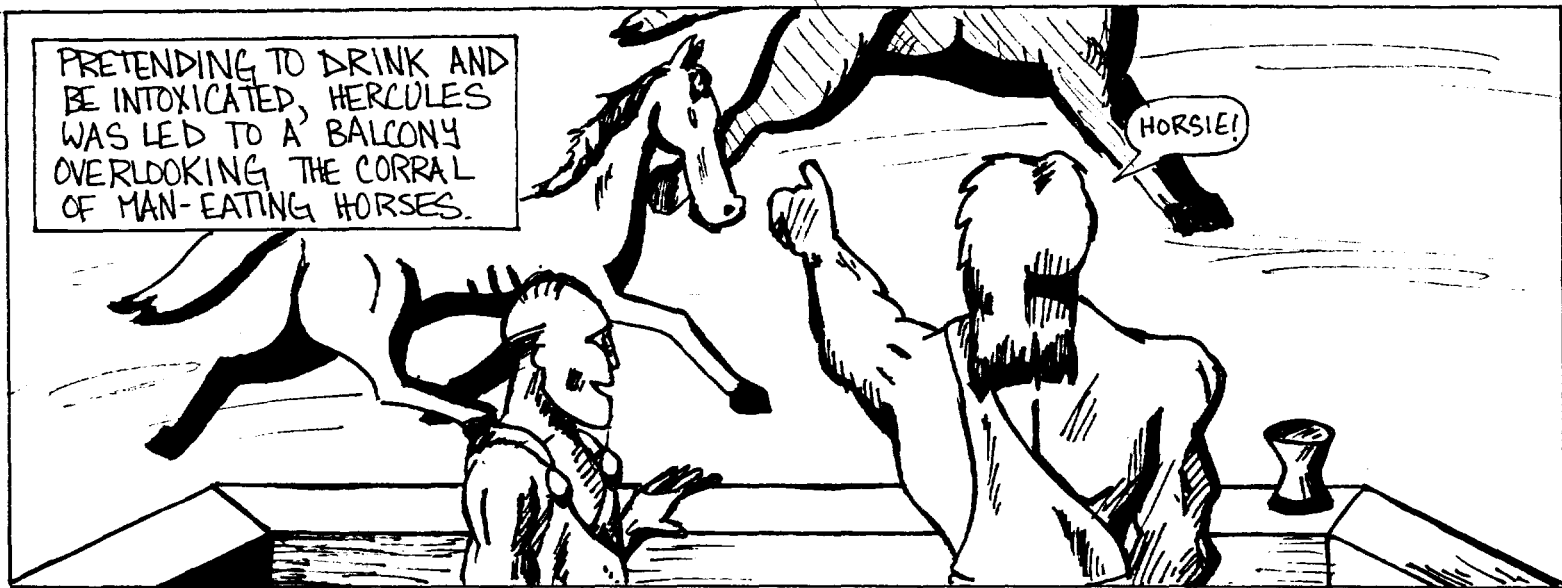
FAR INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE, HERCULES WAS CAPTURED AND TAKEN TO THE KING.



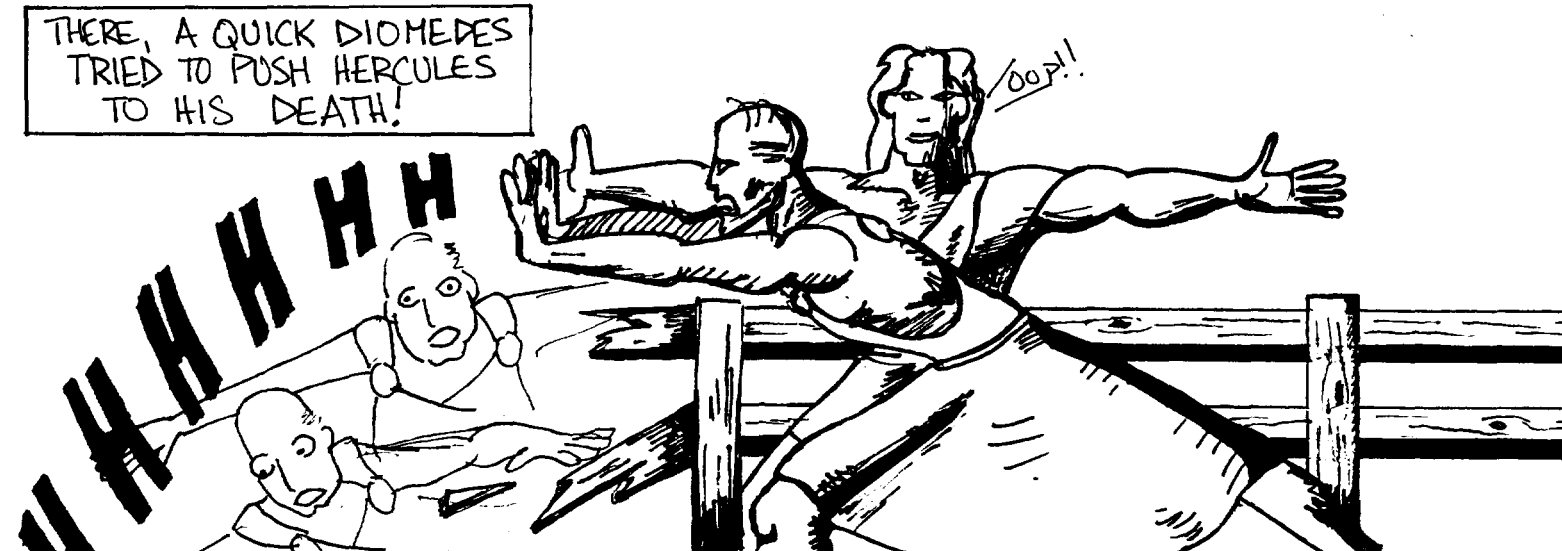
SURPRISINGLY, DIOMEDES GAVE HIM FOOD AND WINE



...LOT'S OF WINE.



PRETENDING TO DRINK AND BE INTOXICATED, HERCULES WAS LED TO A BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE CORRAL OF MAN-EATING HORSES.



ONCE DIOMEDES FELL, HIS HORSES ATTACKED AND HIS PEOPLE FLED IN FEAR!

...HE FAILED!

NOW THAT THEY WERE SATIATED, HERCULES WAS ABLE TO YOKE THE HORSES TO DIOMEDES' CHARIOT.

THIS, HE DROVE HOME.

EURYSTHEUS PRESERVED THE HORSES. BUT, IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE A NEW TEST WAS DEvised.

SWEETIE, REMEMBER WHEN I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE AMAZONS?

WELL, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE THE GOLDEN JEWELLED BELT OF THEIR QUEEN, HIPPOLYTE?

YES.

YEA! DADDY'S KING!!

THUS, HERCULES FOUND HIMSELF SEEKING AMAZONS. BUT, FIRST, HE STOPPED IN ATHENS..

...TO VISIT AN OLD FRIEND.

THESEUS, YOU OL' DOG! HOW YA BEEN?!

WOW! GREAT TO SEE YOU, HERC! OO... OO... GOOD GRIP!

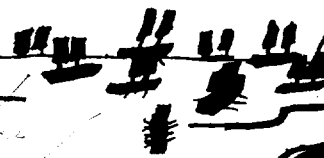
HA HA HA

LATER...

SO, THESEUS, I GOT THIS AMAZON GIG GOING ON NOW... DON'T SUPPOSE YOU AND SOME OF YOUR BOYS WOULD WANT TO JOIN IN?

ARE YOU SERIOUS?! THAT WOULD BE THE GREATEST THING SINCE WHEELED CHARIOTS! OF COURSE WE'LL GO, BY ZEUS!

AFTER CHOOSING 450 OF ATHEN'S FINEST ALONG WITH NINE SHIPS TO ACCOMPANY THEM, THE JOURNEY BEGAN.



UPON LANDING AT CAPPADOCIA, THE ADVENTURERS MOVED SILENTLY TOWARDS THE AMAZON VILLAGE. THEIR PLAN RELIED ON THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

A SCOUT BROUGHT NEWS FROM HIS EXPLORATION...

HERCULES, THE VILLAGE IS JUST HALF A DAY AWAY... AND HALF THE AMAZONS ARE GONE ON A RAID!

THEIR SECURITY IS EVEN LAX FROM INACTIVITY!

OH YES, THIS WILL WORK OUT JUST FINE.

AT DAWN, THE MEN ATTACKED THE AMAZON VILLAGE WITH A SHOUT OF "NIKE!" MEANING "VICTORY" IN GREEK.

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, LADY!

MEN!

MOST WERE CAPTURED EASILY AND THOSE THAT FLED WERE QUICKLY KILLED.

QUEEN HIPPOLYTE DID ESCAPE - BUT SOON CAME BACK TO TRADE HER JEWELLED BELT FOR THE FREEDOM OF HER CAPTURED SISTER.

AS A TWIST, THE SEUS GREW SHITTEN WITH HIPPOLYTE. THEY WERE WED AND RETURNED TO ATHENS WHILE HERCULES TOOK THE BELT TO MYCENAE.

I GIVE THEM SIX MONTHS.

EURYSTHEUS' DAUGHTER LOVED THE BELT-THOUGH HE REPAYED THE DEED BY ASSIGNING YET ANOTHER TASK TO HERCULES. HE WAS NOW TO STEAL THE GREAT CATTLE OF GERION, A GRANDSON OF OCEANUS, THE GOD OF WATER. HERCULES THEN HAD TO BUY HIMSELF PASSAGE ON A PHOENICIAN SHIP. HERE HE LEARNED MUCH ABOUT GERION.

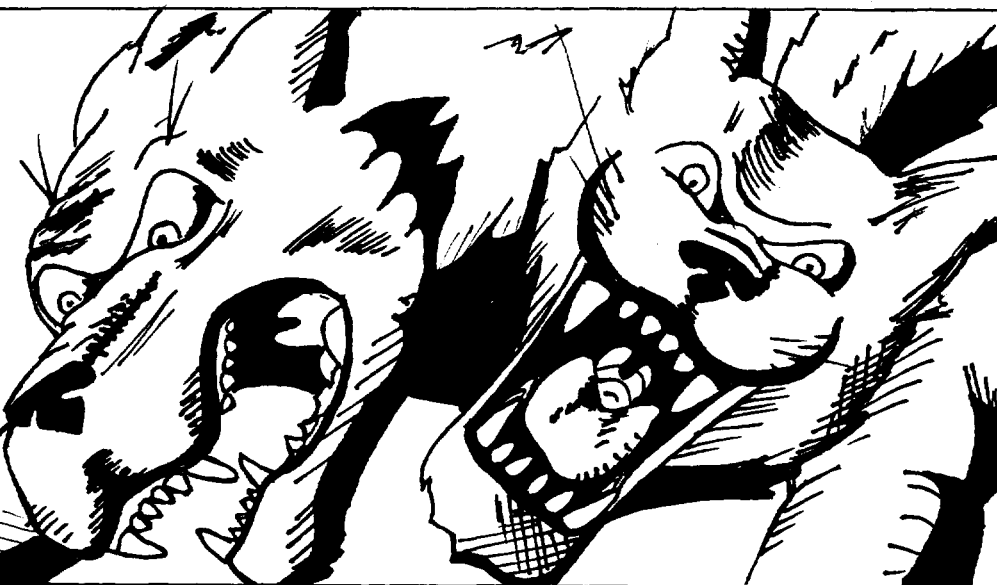
EXCUSE ME, SIR, I'M TRYING TO FIND GERION. COULD YOU MAYBE...

GERION? OH YEAH, HE'S GOT, LIKE, THREE BODIES JOINED AT THE WAIST, A HORRIBLE GAURD, EURYTION, AND A VICIOUS TWO-HEADED DOG NAMED ORTHROS TO PROTECT HIS CATTLE. NO ONE REALLY KNOWS WHERE HE IS-"WHERE THE SUN SETS" IS MY CLOSEST GUESS.



HERCULES TRAVELLED FOR MONTHS-FARTHER AWAY FROM HOME THAN HE'D EVER BEEN. FINALLY, HE FOUND THE CATTLE...

THAT'S WHEN ORTHROS ATTACKED!

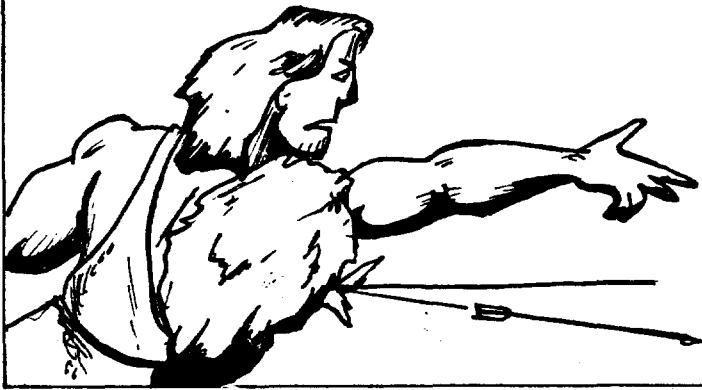


THE BROTHER OF CERBERUS WAS A POWERFUL FOE. BUT,

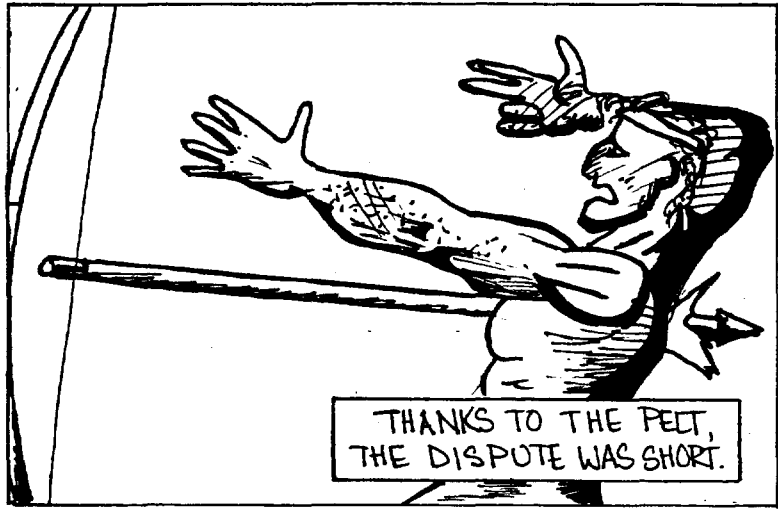


...HERCULES' LION PELT PROTECTED HIM, AND HIS CLUB BROUGHT DEATH TO THE HOUND!

ORTHURUS' HOWLS
BROUGHT EURYTION.



THANKS TO THE PELT,
THE DISPUTE WAS SHORT.



HERCULES TOOK EURYTION'S
HORSE AND HERDED THE
CATTLE TOWARDS HOME. BUT,
AFTER DAYS OF FOLLOWING
THEM, GERYON CAUGHT UP TO THEM!

GERYON, I'M JUST
FOLLOWING EURYSTHEUS'
ORDERS. LEAVE ME BE
AND I'LL LET YOU LIVE!

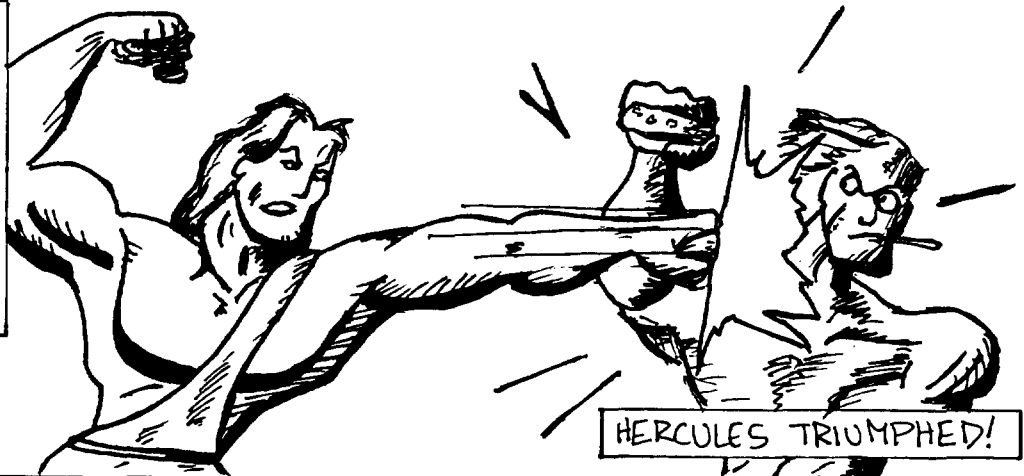


GERYON, THOUGH, PAID NO
HEED AND THREW SIX
SPEARS SIMULTANEOUSLY
... AND WITH PERFECT AIM!



ONCE AGAIN, THE
PELT SAVED HERCULES!

IT WAS THEN THAT
HERCULES SLEW GERYON
WITH A POISONED ARROW.
GOING HOME, THOUGH, HE
WAS FORCED TO BOX
THE WICKED KING ERYX
OF SICILY TO REGAIN
A LOST BOLL FOUND
ON HIS LAND.



HERCULES TRIUMPHED!

THE KING, USING HIS ROYAL AUTHORITY, CLAIMED THE VICTORY MUST BE TWO OUT OF THREE-HE WON ROUND TWO. WITH THE SCORE TIED, HERCULES NOTICED THAT ERYX USED HIS WHOLE BODY TO GET MORE FORCE BEHIND HIS PUNCHES. THIS, HERCULES DID IN ROUND THREE WITH GREAT SUCCESS.



HERCULES' BLOWS KILLED THE KING AND HE RETURNED HOME.



THE ELEVENTH CONTEST- TO RETRIEVE THREE APPLES OF HESPERIDES CAME WITHOUT DELAY.



THUS, HERCULES SET OUT WITH IOLAUS AT HIS SIDE.

LIKE MANY TRAVELLERS NEAR DELPHI, THEY WERE ATTACKED BY CYCNUS, A HIDEOUS SON OF ARES, GOD OF WAR. HERE, ARES WAS ACTUALLY DRIVING CYCNUS' CHARIOT. SINCE HERCULES HAD SWORN TO RID THE WORLD OF MONSTERS, HE RESISTED THE BEASTLY ROGUES. HERCULES AND CYCNUS BOTH LEAPT FROM THEIR CHARIOTS!

THE GIANTS CLASHED!



BUT A SPEAR TO THE
NECK OF CYCNUS ENDED
THE FIGHT... TEMPORARILY

MY SON! YOU
KILLED MY SON!!

ARES ATTACKED!!

ANOTHER DAY,
HERCULES!!

ATHENA INTERVENED AND
WARNED ARES THAT HE WOULD
NOT WIN THIS FIGHT - HE
FLED WITH A WOUNDED LEG

THEN, IOLAUS RETURNED
HOME WITH CYCNUS' ARMOR
AS A PRIZE FOR THE VICTORY.

GOOD LUCK
MY FRIEND.

HERCULES TRAVELLED ON - ONLY
TO MEET PROMETHEUS, A
GIANT IN DISTRESS.

PROMETHEUS HAD BEEN CHAINED TO A
CLIFF AND CURSED WITH AN EAGLE TO
FOREVER FEAST ON HIS LIVER AS PUNISHMENT
FROM THE GODS FOR GIVING FIRE TO MAN.

HERCULES SLEW THE EAGLE WITH A POISON ARROW. HE THEN SPOKE WITH PROMETHEUS.

I KNOW OF YOUR QUEST HERCULES. AND I'LL HELP YOU IF YOU CAN JUST FIND A GOD TO GIVE UP IMMORTALITY FOR ME - IT'S THE ONLY WAY I'LL BE FREED.

I'LL DO MY BEST, BIG GUY.

HE FOUND IRIS, A MESSENGER OF THE GODS, AND ASKED HER TO FIND CHIRON - FOREVER TORTMENTED BY HIS POISON ARROW WOUND - AND ASK HIM TO SACRIFICE HIS IMMORTALITY TO SAVE THE GIANT. CHIRON WAS HAPPY TO END HIS OWN SUFFERING - PROMETHEUS WAS FREE!



YOU'LL HAVE TO GO WEST THROUGHT EGYPT TO GET THE APPLES. FIND MY BROTHER, ATLAS, HE'LL HELP YOU... AND THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME.

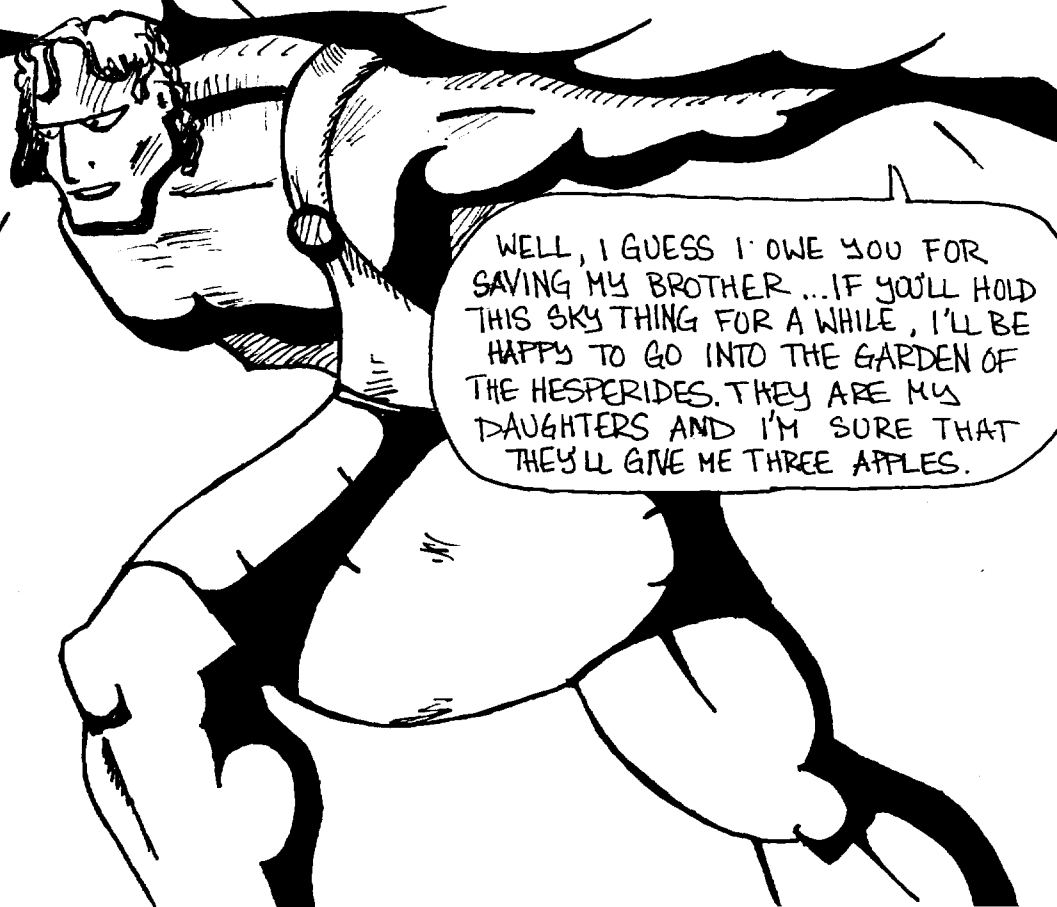
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

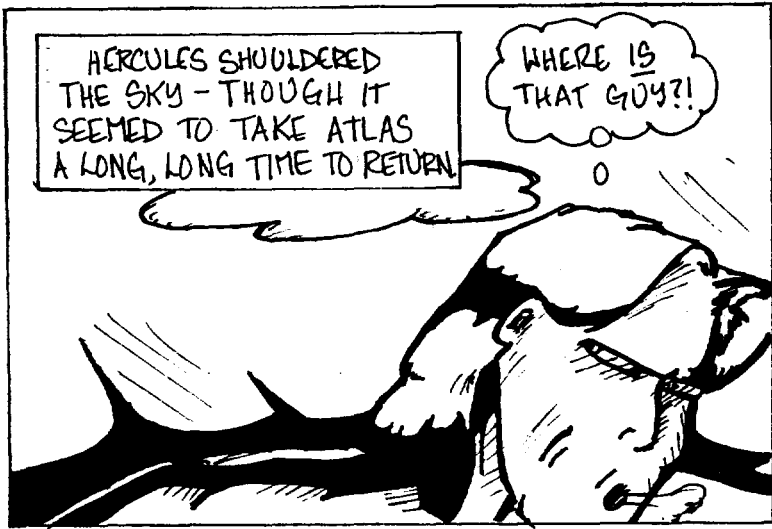


AFTER JOURNEYING FOR WEEKS, HERCULES FOUND ATLAS SUPPORTING THE SKY.

... I'D APPRECIATE THE HELP.

WELL, I GUESS I OWE YOU FOR SAVING MY BROTHER... IF YOU'LL HOLD THIS SKY THING FOR A WHILE, I'LL BE HAPPY TO GO INTO THE GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES. THEY ARE MY DAUGHTERS AND I'M SURE THAT THEY'LL GIVE ME THREE APPLES.





HERCULES SHOULDERED THE SKY - THOUGH IT SEEMED TO TAKE ATLAS A LONG, LONG TIME TO RETURN.

WHERE IS THAT GUY?!

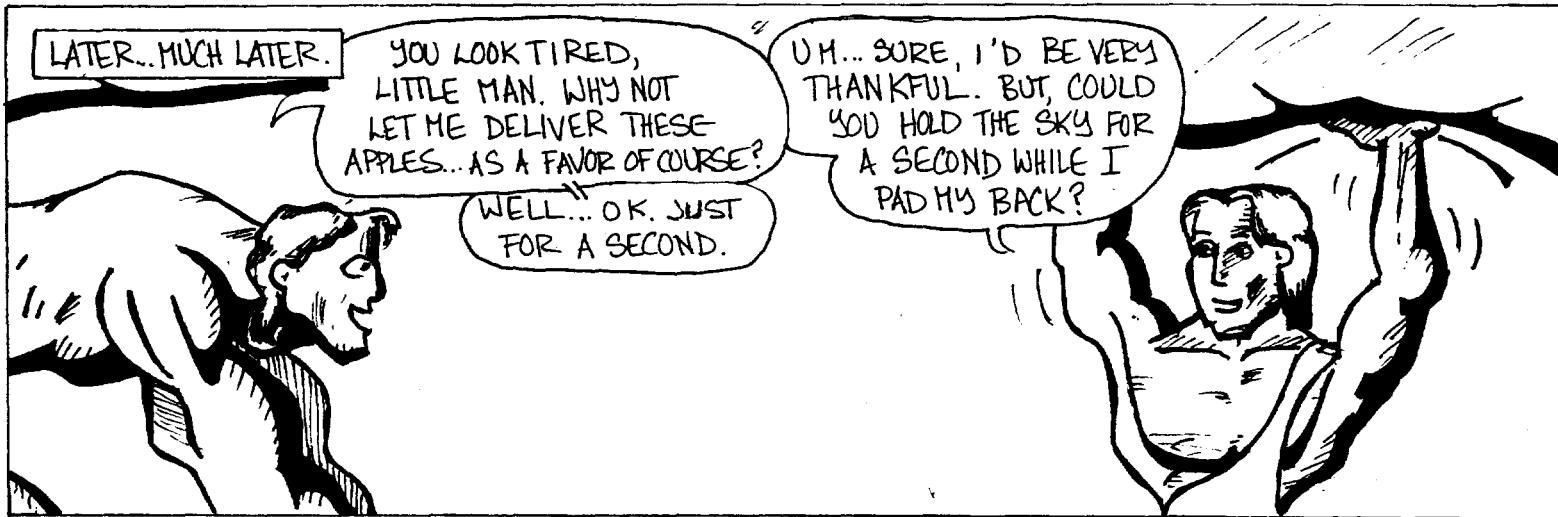


MEANWHILE...

SO THEN I ASKED THIS "OLIVE-HEAD" TO HOLD THE SKY UP WHILE I GET THE APPLES!

OO... I'D BETTER HURRY

OH MAN... HE DIDN'T! WHAT IF HE DROPS IT?



LATER... MUCH LATER.

YOU LOOK TIRED, LITTLE MAN. WHY NOT LET ME DELIVER THESE APPLES... AS A FAVOR OF COURSE?

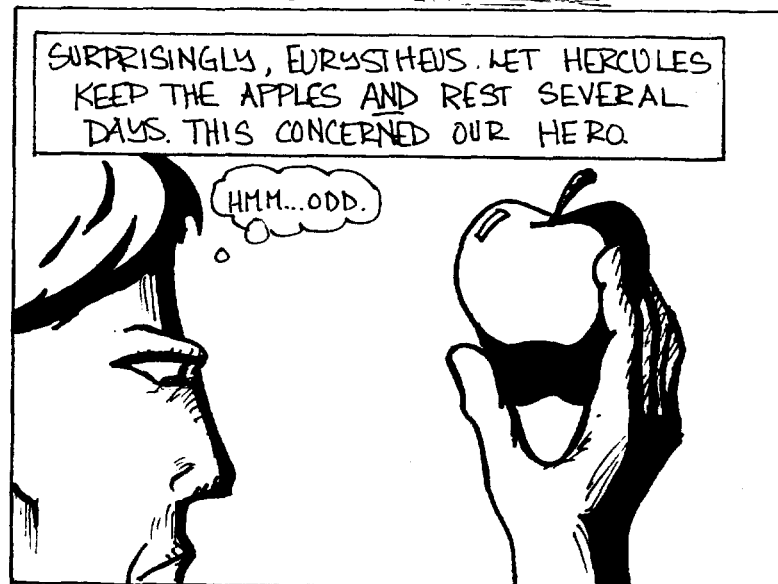
WELL... O.K. JUST FOR A SECOND.

UH... SURE, I'D BE VERY THANKFUL. BUT, COULD YOU HOLD THE SKY FOR A SECOND WHILE I PAD MY BACK?



HEY! GET BACK HERE YOU LITTLE PUNK!!

ABANDONING ATLAS, HERCULES RETURNED HOME WITH THE APPLES.

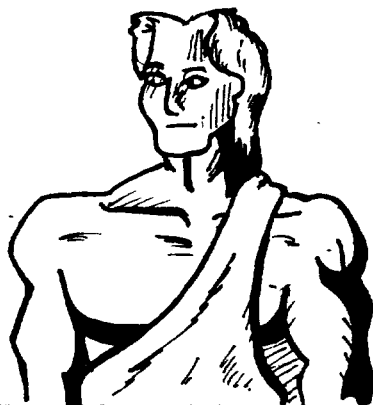


SURPRISINGLY, EURYSTHEUS LET HERCULES KEEP THE APPLES AND REST SEVERAL DAYS. THIS CONCERNED OUR HERO.

HMM... ODD.

THE TWELVTH AND FINAL TEST
CAME FROM THE KING AND
REQUIRED HERCULES TO
CAPTURE CERBERUS, THE
THREE-HEADED WATCHDOG
OF THE RIVER STYX IN THE
LAND OF THE DEAD.

TO ENTER HADES, HERCULES
HAD TO FIRST SACRIFICE A
BLACK BULL AT THE GATE IN
TAENARUM. THIS HE DID.



CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS, HERE?
I MEAN... I'VE HEARD A LOT OF
GODS LIKE GOATS - EVEN MORE THAN
BULLS. HEY.. HEY... C'MON.



INSIDE HADES, OUR HERO
FOOND HUNDREDS OF SOULS
WAITING TO CROSS THE STYX
TO THE LAND OF THE DEAD.
THEN, CERBERUS CAUGHT THE
SCENT OF HERCULES, A LIVING
SOUL - THE DOG ATTACKED!



DOGGIE... DOGGIE...!



HAVING PLANNED AHEAD, HERCULES
HAD BROUGHT A DRUGGED
HONEYCAKE TO APPEASE THE DOG.
SOON, CERBERUS WAS SLEEPING SOUNDLY

THEN, HERCULES AWAITED
CHARON TO FERRY HIM
ACROSS THE STYX - IN
RETURN, HE GAVE CHARON
THE CUSTOMARY GOLD COIN.

PLEASE, I NEED TO
TALK WITH PLUTO.
IT'S EXTREMELY
IMPORTANT.

OOO...GOLD. FAT LOT OF
GOOD THAT'LL DO HE
DOWN HERE. THANKS A LOT

HOW CAN I REFUSE
THE SON OF ZEUS?



ONCE ACROSS, HERCULES FOUND THESEUS IMPRISONED ALIVE AS PUNISHMENT FOR ENTERING HADES TO SIEZE A BRIDE FOR A FRIEND. OUR HERO TOOK THIS TO HEART WHEN HE APPROACHED PLUTO TO EXPLAIN HIS SITUATION.

IT'S FAR TOO DANGEROUS TO TAKE CERBERUS TO THE TOP - I MEAN... HE'S KIND OF BAD WITH KIDS IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!
OK, LET'S MAKE IT A LITTLE FRIENDLY BET - IF I'M SUCCESSFUL AND RETURN CERBERUS, YOU LET MYSELF AND THESEUS FREE. IF I FAIL, YOU GET TO KEEP BOTH OF US.

INTRIGUED BY THE WAGER, PLUTO AGREED.



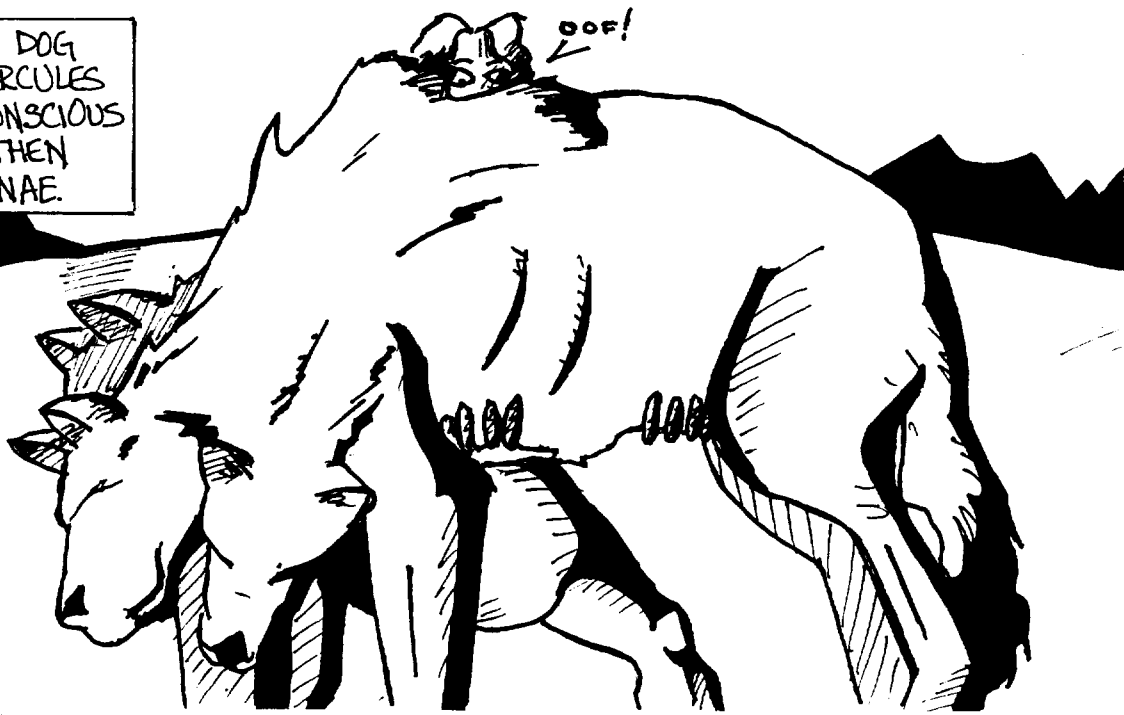
IF IT WERE UP TO ME, YOU COULD JUST KEEP THAT MUTT - SMELLS WORSE THAN THESE DEAD FOLKS.

BUT, BY THE TIME HERCULES CROSSED THE STYX, CERBERUS HAD WOKEN UP!

SNIFF
SNIFF



AGAIN, HERCULES AND THE DOG CLASHED. EVENTUALLY, HERCULES KNOCKED CERBERUS UNCONSCIOUS WITH HIS CLUB. THEY THEN PROCEEDED BACK TO MYCENAE.



ONLY BY COVERING CERBERUS' LIGHT-SENSITIVE EYES, COULD THE DOG TOLERATE THE SUN. AND, ONLY BY THREATENING SHIP CAPTAINS COULD THEY GAIN PASSAGE HOME BY BOAT. EVEN SO, IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THEY NEARED MYCENAE.



UH... YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU MIGHT WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

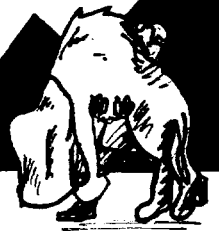


HERCULES, STOP! DO NOT COME ANY CLOSER... PLEASE!

EURYSTHEUS WANTS YOU TO RETURN CERBERUS... NOW! DO THAT AND YOU'RE FREE!!



JUST... JUST KEEP THE DOG THERE!



UPON RETURNING THE DOG, BOTH HERCULES AND THESEUS REMAINED FREE.



OUR HERO THEN WENT ON TO SURVIVE MANY, MANY MORE EXPLOITS. ALL OF WHICH, HOWEVER FALL OUTSIDE THE REALM OF THIS STORY. END

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